LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

(Original) A method of manufacturing syntactic foam including the steps of:
providing a predetermined ratio of constituent materials including a liquid phase binder
and microspheres that are naturally buoyant in that binder;

blending the constituent materials into a mixture and placing the mixture into a mould; allowing the microspheres to float to the top of the mixture; draining excess liquid phase binder from the mould; and allowing the remaining liquid phase binder to set or cure between the microspheres.

- 2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the microspheres are allowed to float to the top of the mixture until they become close packed.
- 3. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 2 or wherein the microspheres become close packed in a density approaching the natural microsphere bulk density.
- 4. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in either claim 2 or claim 3 wherein the step of allowing the microspheres to float to the top of the mixture until they become close packed is facilitated by selecting a liquid phase binder composition that has sufficiently low viscous drag characteristics, and sufficiently long curing time, to allow the microspheres to become close packed before the binder cures.
- 5. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein the liquid phase binder composition is selected by adding a predetermined amount of diluent.
- 6. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein the liquid phase binder includes an expoxy resin with hardener, and the diluent comprises acetone.
 - 7. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in any one of the preceding claims claim 1

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wherein the excess liquid phase binder is drained from the bottom of the mould.

- 8. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 7 when dependent upon claim 2 in claim 2 wherein the liquid phase binder is drained from the bottom of the mould until the close packed microspheres reach the bottom of the mould.
- 9. (Currently Amended) A syntactic foam article comprising close packed microspheres bound together by a cured, originally liquid phase binder, manufactured by a method according to any one of the preceding claims claim 1.